

## Essential Information about the National Art Library

This is a summary of information about the collections of the National Art Library and its services to readers. Full information is provided in the web pages at <http://www.vam.ac.uk/nal/>

- The National Art Library is a major public reference library that specialises in information about the fine and decorative arts of many countries and periods.  
Subjects covered include those central to the work of the Victoria and Albert Museum (V&A) and its collections, including: prints, drawings and paintings; furniture and woodwork; textiles, dress and fashion; ceramics and glass; metalwork; sculpture; art and design of the Far East, India and South East Asia; history of the art, craft and design of the book. The Library is also an excellent source for information about artists
- It is **located** on Level 3 (first floor) of the V&A  
Tel: +44 (0)20 7942 2400 (Enquiry desk)  
Fax: +44 (0)20 7942 2401  
Email: [nal.enquiries@vam.ac.uk](mailto:nal.enquiries@vam.ac.uk)  
Postal address: National Art Library, Word & Image department, Victoria and Albert Museum, Cromwell Road, London SW7 2RL
- **Opening hours:** Tuesday – Saturday, 10.00 – 17.30, Friday 10.00 – 18.30  
Last request for Special Collections material at 15.30  
Last request for General Collection material at 16.30
- **Planned closures:**  
Saturdays preceding a Bank Holiday Monday (Easter and twice in May); for annual stocktake during August and Christmas opening times, check website for full details.

- The National Art Library is open to all for reference purposes (material is not lent out) and visitors are welcome to come into the library to simply look around the reading rooms. Those visitors wishing to consult our material are required to join the Library and obtain a **reader's ticket** by completing a reader registration form and showing appropriate personal identification; some categories of ticket also require two passport size photographs. There is no charge for either entry to the Library or registering as a reader
- Apart from some self-service reference books shelved in the reading rooms, the vast majority of the collections are '**closed access**' and need to be ordered. Readers are required to use the catalogues to identify the material they would like to see and request it using the printed forms available.
- Some items in the collection are stored, issued and consulted in more controlled conditions than other stock. These items are categorised as **Special Collections**, perhaps because of their rarity or uniqueness, or because of provenance, or because of the need to preserve them in their original format as exhibition objects and specimens of book production. A few examples of the type of material held in Special Collections are: artists' letters, book art, calligraphy, children's books, early printed books, illuminated manuscripts and modern book and magazine design
- Most of the National Art Library's collections are catalogued on the online catalogue, available at <http://catalogue.nal.vam.ac.uk>  
If possible, it is advisable for readers to consult the catalogue before coming to the Library and to use the facility of ordering material in advance over the telephone or by email
- The National Art Library provides access to a range of **electronic resources**, including online bibliographic and image databases, electronic encyclopaedias and, in some cases, the full texts of journals and other publications. However, some of these electronic resources can only be made available within the V&A, for copyright or licensing reasons.

- The National Art Library provides a range of **copying services** primarily for the purposes of private study or research; these include a self-service photocopier, a bookable digital camera, a bookable camera stand for those using their own camera, computer print outs and a microform reader/printer
- The National Art Library offers an **enquiry service** to answer questions about its collections or those of other libraries, the Museum's collections, biographical information about artists, designers, architects and craftspeople and general subject enquiries in the field of art, craft and design. Enquiries may be answered face-to-face in the Reading Rooms or by telephone or email
- The National Art Library is committed to providing an efficient and effective service to all its users whilst at the same time, safeguarding the material in our care to preserve it for use by future generations. Full details appear in the [Code of Conduct](#)

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